

*Swaffham*  
SWAFFHAM URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

together with the

REPORT

of the



PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

1957

S T A F F.

Medical Officer of Health: Robert N.C. McCurdy, M.B.Ch.B., D.P.H.

Public Health Inspector : John Miles, M.Inst.H.E., C.R.S.I.

COMMITTEES concerned with matters of PUBLIC HEALTH.

Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Housing Committee.

Housing Investigation Committee.

Roads and Sanitary Committee.

Water Supplies and Sewerage Committee.

GENERAL STATISTICS.

Area in acres. . . . .	7,592
Population (estimated at mid-year by Registrar-General)	3,110
Number of Inhabited Houses . . .	1,145
Rateable Value . . . . .	£32,047
Product of 1d. Rate . . . . .	£125



Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report for the year 1957.

There were, during 1957, several favourable trends in the health of the District. Although the Birthrate fell to 17.7 per thousand of the population, it remained above the national rate of 16.1. For the third year running, no still-births were registered and for the fourth year, there were no deaths from tuberculosis. No infants died under one year of age.

The Deathrate fell to 13.5 per thousand of the population, although it remains well above the national rate of 11.5.

Apart from a small epidemic of measles, the number of cases of infectious diseases notified was low. No cases of food poisoning were notified.

#### MEDICAL STATISTICS

<u>BIRTHS</u>		<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Live Births	...	25	30	55
Stillbirths	...	0	0	0

#### POPULATION AT MID-YEAR, BIRTHS, BIRTHRATE, STILLBIRTHS, STILLBIRTH RATES, DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS.

	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957
Population	3,012	3,030	3,040	3,070	3,110
Births	45	36	53	58	55
Birthrate per 1,000 of population	14.9	11.9	17.4	18.9	17.7
Stillbirths	1	2	0	0	0
Stillbirth rate per 1,000 of population	0.33	0.67	0	0	0.0
Stillbirth rate per 1,000 total births	21.7	52.6	0	0	0.0

<u>DEATHS</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
All ages	12	30	42
Infants under 1 year	0	0	0

POPULATION AT MID-YEAR, DEATHS, DEATHRATE, INFANT  
DEATHS AND INFANT MORTALITY RATE, DURING THE PAST  
FIVE YEARS.

	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957
Population	3,012	3,030	3,040	3,070	3,110
Deaths	36	36	41	47	42
Deathrate per 1,000 of population	11.9	11.9	13.5	15.3	13.5
Infant Deaths	2	0	0	2	0
Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 live births	44.4	0	0	34.5	0.0

DEATHS FROM CERTAIN SELECTED CAUSES DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS

Cause	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957
Tuberculosis	1	0	0	0	0
Bronchitis and Pneumonia	2	3	2	6	3
Other notifiable infectious diseases	1	0	0	0	0
Motor vehicle & other accidents	2	0	4	1	2
Pregnancy, childbirth and abortion	0	0	0	0	0
Cancer of lung and bronchus	0	1	1	4	1
Cancer, all other sites	5	6	8	6	4

DEATHS ACCORDING TO AGES (compiled from returns submitted by the District Registrar)

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
Under 1 year	0	0	0
1 and under 5	0	0	0
5 " " 10	0	0	0
10 " " 20	0	1	1
20 " " 30	0	0	0
30 " " 40	0	0	0
Carried forward	0	1	1

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
Brought forward	0	1	1
40 and under 50	1	0	1
50 " " 60	1	1	2
60 " " 70	3	4	7
70 " " 80	4	10	14
80 " " 90	3	5	8
90 and over	0	9	9
Totals	12	30	42

CAUSES OF DEATH AT AGES ABOVE 1 YEAR and BELOW 50

Age Group	Sex	Cause
10 to 20	Female	Road accident.
40 to 50	Male	Cerebral haemorrhage.

DEATHS FROM ALL CAUSES (Registrar-General's Short List)

List No.	Cause	Male	Female	Total
1	Tuberculosis, respiratory	0	0	0
2	Tuberculosis, other	0	0	0
3	Syphilitic disease	0	0	0
4	Diphtheria	0	0	0
5	Whooping Cough	0	0	0
6	Meningococcal infections	0	0	0
7	Acute Poliomyelitis	0	0	0
8	Measles	0	0	0
9	Other infective and parasitic diseases	0	0	0
10	Malignant neoplasm, stomach	1	0	1
11	Malignant neoplasm, lung bronchus	0	1	1
12	Malignant Neoplasm, breast	0	1	1
13	Malignant neoplasm, uterus	0	0	0
14	Other malignant & lymphatic neoplasms	2	0	2
	Carried forward	3	2	5

List No.	Cause	Male	Female	Total
	Brought forward	3	2	5
15	Leukaemia, aleukaemia	0	0	0
16	Diabetes	0	0	0
17	Vascular lesions of nervous system	2	5	7
18	Coronary disease, angina	2	5	7
19	Hypertension with heart disease	1	1	2
20	Other heart disease	1	9	10
21	Other circulatory disease	2	2	4
22	Influenza	0	0	0
23	Pneumonia	0	0	0
24	Bronchitis	0	3	3
25	Other diseases of respiratory system	0	0	0
26	Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	0	0	0
27	Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea	0	0	0
28	Nephritis and nephrosis	0	1	1
29	Hyperplasia of prostate	0	0	0
30	Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion	0	0	0
31	Congenital malformations	0	0	0
32	Other defined and ill-defined diseases	0	1	1
33	Motor vehicle accidents	0	1	1
34	All other accidents	1	0	1
35	Suicide	0	0	0
36	Homicide and operations of war	0	0	0
	All causes	12	30	42

THE FOLLOWING TABLE COMPARES BIRTHRATES, DEATHRATES,  
ETC. OF THIS DISTRICT WITH THOSE OF ENGLAND AND WALES AND OF  
THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNTY OF NORFOLK IN 1957.

	England and Wales	Norfolk	District
Birthrate	16.1	15.4	17.7
Stillbirth rate per 1,000 total births	22.4	22.5	0.0
Deathrate	11.5	11.7	13.5
Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 live births	23.0	22.5	0.0
Tuberculosis deathrate per 1,000 population	0.11	0.07	0.0
Lung Cancer deathrate per 1,000 population	0.43	0.29	0.32

INFECTIOUS DISEASES NOTIFIED DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS

	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957
Tuberculosis, all sites	1	1	0	2	1
Scarlet Fever	5	4	1	4	1
Whooping Cough	64	8	2	2	4
Measles	49	11	1	3	26
Poliomyelitis	0	0	1	0	0
Pneumonia	3	2	2	4	0
Puerperal pyrexia	0	0	1	0	0
Infectious jaundice	2	5	0	0	0
Food Poisoning	0	0	2	0	0

INFECTIOUS DISEASES NOTIFIED IN 1957 BY AGES

Disease	Under 1 yr.							Over 65		Total
	1-5	5-10	10-15	15-25	25-45	45-65				
Tuberculosis	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	
Scarlet Fever	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	
Whooping Cough	-	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	4	
Measles	-	8	14	2	-	2	-	-	26	

INFECTIOUS DISEASES NOTIFIED IN 1957 BY MONTH OF NOTIFICATION

Diseases	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Tuberculosis	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Scarlet Fever	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Whooping Cough	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	4
Measles	-	-	1	1	1	3	3	2	-	-	-	15	26

THE FOLLOWING TABLE SHOWS THE NUMBER OF CASES ON THE  
TUBERCULOSIS REGISTER AT 31st DECEMBER, 1957, COMPARED  
WITH 31st DECEMBER, 1956

	Respiratory			Non-Respiratory			Grand Total
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
31.12.56.	6	0	6	0	0	0	6
31.12.57.	5	0	5	0	0	0	5

I should like to thank the Chairman and Members of the Council and my colleagues on the staff, for their continued support and help during the year.

I have the honour to be,  
Your obedient Servant,

ROBERT N. C. McCURDY

Medical Officer of Health

SWAFFHAM URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR'S REPORT FOR YEAR 1957

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

My fourth Annual Report covers a year of even greater activity in public health work, judged on the basis of time devoted to this service. Controversial issues have been few, and concrete evidence of the work done is quite unspectacular. The value of such a report is perhaps on these accounts all the greater.

HOUSING.

It is disappointing that in this most important field of activity, we have so little to show in the way of progress, but the figures must be reviewed against the background of the financial restrictions imposed at Government level. The Council were forced into the position of being unable to build houses and it was left to private enterprise to provide the only additions to our housing resources with the erection of seven new houses. The one redeeming feature is the fact that we have a site prepared in readiness for immediate building and this is of paramount importance, since it is quite certain that a fall in interest rates will tempt many Local Authorities into early activity and so create a sharp increase in demand on the building industry. Swaffham could be among the leaders in this eventuality.

SLUM CLEARANCE.

Slum clearance must of necessity, wait on new housing to some degree, but it was encouraging that the Council pursued a consistent policy in this matter and took every opportunity to deal with bad housing conditions. This resulted in a further reduction of the back-log by the demolition of twelve houses; and formal closing orders being made on eight other houses. Of the latter, five are already cleared of tenants and the remainder can be dealt with as occasion offers.

CARAVANS.

The Watton Road site continues to be a model of its kind and the Council have treated this matter with such discretion that the few isolated sites for single caravans have been chosen in such a way that amenities have been preserved without hardship to individuals. Travellers have enjoyed our hospitality without overstaying their welcome and no formal action was called for during the year.

HOUSE REFUSE and NIGHT SOIL.

The quantity of house refuse steadily increases, but this has imposed no undue strain on our services. The disposal tip has been well maintained and no complaints were received on this score.

The necessity for night soil collection continues to decrease as new houses are built and many old properties are modernised. There has been a significant increase, however, in the cost of emptying cesspools. It is hoped that the Council will bear this rising cost in mind when considering plans for new houses on sites not accessible to sewers. There is no real shortage of potential building land in Swaffham, either sewered already, or capable of being thus served and development should always be encouraged on these lines.

## SCAVENGING.

A little further progress has been made in the improvement of the scavenging of minor roads, but still more labour must be allocated to this work before it can be said that the whole of the built-up area is adequately treated.

## SEWERAGE and SEWAGE DISPOSAL

My last report recorded the progress made in developing the new irrigation area at the Sewage Disposal Works and a guardedly optimistic view of the success of the scheme was taken. The work was completed during the year under review and it can now be said that the plan has been fully justified. For the first time for many years it was possible to rest part of the works and a large area of the old irrigation area was reclaimed from constant flooding and put into rotational use. Rubble from slum clearance schemes was utilised to build access roads to enable the reclamation area to be regularly de-sludged by mechanical means. Complete control of the whole works is now possible and flooding eliminated. The Council have wisely devoted funds each year ~~for the~~ purpose of restoring the old carrier system and the ultimate aim is to sub-divide the works in such a way, that at least one third of the land is being rested. A saving has been made by combining carriers in groups of sufficient size to justify the use of a dragline excavator for de-sludging and thus, incidentally, obviating the use of manual labour on a ~~far~~ from pleasant operation.

There is one point, with regard to the sewerage system, which I consider should be referred to, namely the surcharging of the sewer from the Sporle Road crossroads to Box's Lane. This happens from time to time during heavy storms, and on three occasions during the year, manhole covers were lifted and local overflows resulted. This contingency can only be mitigated by increasing the size of the outfall sewers from this point to the Disposal Works - a major and costly scheme but one which, undoubtedly, will have to be faced up to if the town continues to grow.

## WATER SUPPLY.

The difficulty referred to in my previous report relative to the repeated failure of the electric pumps was tackled most successfully early in the year and plant remained trouble free from that point onwards. Consumption for the year again amounted to a little more than 31,000,000 gallons. Several samples were taken at intervals throughout the period and at no time was a bacterial count registered.

When my next annual report is presented, it may well be that our waterworks undertaking will be in process of digestion by a larger or composite authority. The only redeeming feature of such an amalgamation will be the knowledge that we shall hand over, from the public health point of view, an irreproachable supply from an unfailing source.

## FOOD INSPECTION.

The previous report dealt, at some length, with this matter, particularly with regard to the Food Hygiene Regulations. This code has been operated with appreciable success both in the shops and in the Market. There is no mathematical standard by which such improvements can be measured, but it is with a sense of relief and a somewhat smug satisfaction that, far away from our own area, we still see open food handled in a manner which would cause local traders to hold up their hands in pious horror.

The aim has always been to educate the individual first and improve the structure of his premises afterwards; and very often good results have been obtained in quite mediocre surroundings. The public too, plays its part in refusing to accept low standards. As a more practical proof, it can be recorded that one cafe was completely modernised during the year and a new one which opened, was established on excellent lines. The Market demands continued supervision, but here again, real advances have been made in the hygienic handling of food.

There is, however, no room for complacency in this matter and I hope, during the winter, to arrange, with the Council's assistance, one or two film displays for the benefit of employees in this industry. I feel strongly that this is the approach which will bring the best results and the consistently happy co-operation which I have enjoyed with the trade, encourages me to believe that attendances would justify the experiment.

The following table gives the number of establishments in the town which come within the scope of this work:

Butchers' shops	...	...	5
Grocers' and Greengrocers	.	13	
Cafes, restaurants,			
canteens etc.	...	12	
Bakers & Confectioners	...	5	
Fishmongers and fryers	...	2	
Milk, Ice-cream etc.	...	12	

#### MEAT INSPECTION.

This subject is now as familiar to the Council as it is to me and in the four years of my stay in Swaffham, the work has increased fourfold. Unlike the previous subject, however, the results stemming from meat inspection are very obvious indeed, whether one looks into the condemned room at the slaughterhouse, or the table following this section of the report. The need for constant vigilance is apparent and I would like to emphasize this from one aspect of the problem. In the past four years, the percentage of cattle passing through the Swaffham slaughterhouses affected by tuberculosis has risen from 7 to 9%.

I referred in my last report to legislation then before Parliament and this year I can go further and record The passing of the Slaughterhouses Act of 1958. It would be premature to go fully into the possible implications of this legislation, as the full import of the Act cannot be assessed until the Minister formulates the Regulations dealing with standards and construction under Section 13. Whatever form these regulations may take, however, it is quite certain that Swaffham will be concerned in a relatively high degree.

#### Carcasses Inspected and Condemned.

Item	Description	Cattle	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Figs	Total
1.	Number killed	5583	173	4410	7437	17603
2.	Number inspected	5583	173	4410	7437	17603
3.	All diseases except Tuberculosis					
	Whole carcases condemned	2	2	2	7	13
4.	Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	1918	-	433	983	3334

Item	Description	Cattle	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs	Total
5.	Percentage of the number inspected affected with a disease other than Tuberculosis ignoring broken legs or tissues defective from fighting, fences, etc.	34	1	10	13	19
6.	Tuberculosis only Whole carcases condemned	18	-	-	6	24
7.	Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned (taking into account that the offal, head and tongue etc. may be parts of one animal).	486	-	-	98	584
8.	Percentage of the number inspected affected with Tuberculosis.	9	-	-	1	3
9.	Average number of animals slaughtered per week	107	3	85	143	338
10.	Percentage examined by the Meat Inspector.	100	100	100	100	100

#### RODENT CONTROL.

The extent of this work must not be taken from the Table of Public Health Inspection which ends my report, as the figure given there relates only to my own inspections and even then, does not include Council properties. Our trained operator has been called to every part of the town and has consistently given excellent service to the public. He has also devoted considerable time to the treatment of our own properties, including the sewerage system, sewage disposal works, refuse tip and allotments.

#### PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTION OF THE AREA.

Item	Description	Inspections	Notices served	Nuisances abated or pending
1.	Factories and Workshops	11	-	-
2.	Bakehouses, Foodshops, Market and Abattoir	538	-	-
3.	Housing Defects (Housing Act, 1936)	50	7	3 fumigations 7
4.	Middens, Ashpits and Bins (Public Health Act, 1936)	6	6	6
5.	Infectious diseases	2	-	-
6.	Dangerous Buildings	4	4	4
7.	Rodent Control (Pests Act '49)	9	-	-
8.	Tents, Vans, Sheds, Etc.	9	-	-
9.	Water Supply	5	-	-
10.	Draains, Cesspools, Vaults, Pail and Water Closets and Drainage of Premises	69	2	2
11.	Ice Cream and Milk	6	-	-
TOTAL		709	19	19

Note: Council house inspections are not included in this Table and though meat inspection calls for two or three visits per day to the same slaughterhouse, this is recorded as a single inspection in the summary.

I have the honour to be,  
Your obedient Servant, JOHN MILES.  
Public Health Inspector.